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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PRISTINA 000592

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DEPT FOR DRL, INL, EUR/SCE  
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TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [KV](#) [UNMIK](#)  
SUBJECT: KOSOVO: NORTHERN POLITICIANS DISCUSS STATUS,  
SECURITY

REF: PRISTINA 323

Classified By: CHIEF OF MISSION TINA KAIDANOW FOR REASONS 1.4 (b),(d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. Two Serb politicians from Leposavic and Zubin Potok evinced a desire to cooperate with the international community on security and stability, but also continued reluctance to cooperate with the PISG. Both stressed that relations with KFOR are currently good and emphasized their positive relations with Albanian minority residents in their municipalities, despite a recent incident in the Albanian village of Ceranje in Leposavic. While dismissing the prospect of elections as irrelevant for northern Kosovo Serbs, both politicians explicitly mentioned partition as the most realistic possible outcome of the final status process. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) Poloff visited Leposavic Mayor Velimir Bojovic and Zubin Potok Deputy Mayor Srdjan Djurovic on July 24. Both expressed appreciation for a visit from USOP, and appeared to speak with candor about issues of mutual concern.

SECURITY AND STABILITY - FOR NOW

¶3. (C) Poloff emphasized USOP's desire to work together with northern leaders, KFOR, and the KPS to provide stability and security up to and beyond the final status process. Both mayors agreed with this, stressing their good working relationships with KFOR and the KPS. However, Djurovic demurred when asked for his impressions about potential security issues after status, saying that resolution in any form would bring great tension, and that he couldn't guarantee that local institutions could keep people under control during such an emotional time. Both Djurovic and Bojovic said they hoped the region could move through the status process peacefully.

COOPERATION WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

¶4. (C) When asked about working with the international community, Bojovic said that the ICO seemed to be a "well-intentioned" organization, and claimed that he was

actually grateful for KFOR's establishment of Camp Nothing Hill, located immediately outside the town of Leposavic, "as long as it was intended to protect Serbs." Djurovic said he was thankful in "great measure" to USAID for its recent work in Zubin Potok (reftel has details of recent USAID projects in northern Kosovo). Djurovic's gratitude, however, was tempered by his frank assessment of U.S. standing in the north, telling poloff "your (America's) rating here is very low, you know." Both seemed more than willing to receive more international aid, though neither would affirm it might change hearts and minds; Bojovic mentioned his municipality's high unemployment rate and poor infrastructure as key problems.

#### RELATIONS WITH MINORITIES

15. (C) Leposavic and Zubin Potok have Albanian enclaves; Djurovic and Bojovic both claimed that relations between Serbs and Albanians in their municipalities were excellent and trouble-free. When asked about a recent incident involving the Albanian village of Ceranje in Leposavic municipality, Bojovic blamed "outsiders" for causing the problem and said investigation of this incident was proceeding with full cooperation between his government, the KPS, and KFOR. (Note: According to a KPS police report and UNMIK sources, on July 19 the Leposavic Fire Brigade, made up entirely of local Serbs, responded to a call to fight a forest fire in Ceranje; upon arriving they were threatened by an Albanian who told them "not to cross the river" into the village and that they were not welcome to fight fires in the area. An ICO officer told poloff that the individual was not local, but an Albanian from outside the area who wanted to stir up trouble. Gerald Gallucci, UNMIK Representative in

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Mitrovica, told poloff June 20 that moderate Albanian leaders had warned him about Albanian extremists using northern Albanian enclaves as staging areas for provocation and violence, asking him for assistance. End Note).

#### ELECTIONS AND THE PISG

16. (C) Djurovic said that he saw "no point" to Serb participation in Kosovo local or central elections this fall, adding that he doubted the capacity of Kosovo institutions to hold them successfully. He went on to say that pre-status Kosovo elections were too rushed in the current environment. Bojovic initially mistook a question about elections as being related to Serbian polls for President, saying that Serbs would be happy to participate. When the question was narrowed to Kosovo elections he waved it off, also saying "there's no point," but did see at least theoretical benefits to direct municipal elections. Neither politician expressed much interest in or enthusiasm for PISG institutions; Bojovic said PM Ceku should refrain from making statements about independence.

#### PARTITION A REAL CONSIDERATION

17. (C) Bojovic said he thought partition of Kosovo was the only long term solution to interethnic problems here, saying that Leposavic citizens "want (only) to live in Serbia," and even drew a diagram detailing his idea of a territorial division identifying the northern municipalities (including north Mitrovica), Strpce, and areas east of Gjilane/Gnjilane as going to Serbia. He said that Serbs could only feel safe with the Serbian army and police guarding them. When asked what would become of the southern Serb enclaves and numerous Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) monasteries and churches after such a division, he asserted it was "obvious" the southern enclaves "could not survive" in any event, adding that SOC sites would always require international protection. Bojovic said he hoped for "real" negotiations that could lead to a partition. Djurovic, while not using the word "partition," said that Serbs would turn to Belgrade after final status and that only purely Serbian institutions would function in the

north. He opined that even in Yugoslavia, Kosovo Serbs and Albanians had lived "next to, but not really with" each other and that Serbs and Albanians could never again live peacefully together in Kosovo.

COMMENT

18. (C) We have heard many times the dismissive attitude with which northern Kosovo Serbs regard their southern brethren, but their apparent eagerness to contemplate a partition solution is troubling not only from our perspective but from that of the many Serbs south of the Ibar who fear such an outcome above all others. Also disturbing is the northern Serbs' dismissal of the possibility of participating in Kosovo elections, particularly municipal elections, which they did agree to hold in 2002. The latter could pose a serious political problem as we approach the prospect of nearly simultaneous Serbian and Kosovo municipal elections, especially if local Serb leaders assert their right to participate in Serbian elections. We will need to consider our options if this occurs, and may need to approach Belgrade early to encourage Kosovar Serb engagement in the Kosovo election process.

KAIDANOW